

## Message Text

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ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W

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FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6491

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 CAIRO 11560

NODIS

CHEROKEE

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM AMBASSADOR

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, EG, US, LE, SY, IS

SUBJ: TALK WITH FAHMY

REF CAIRO 10782,

SUMMARY: WHEN WITH FAHMY IN ALEXANDRIA YESTERDAY, I TOLD HIM ABOUT MY MEETING WITH SADAT EARLIER THIS MONTH AT WHICH I HAD GIVEN THE PRESIDENT YOUR ANALYSIS OF CURRENT MIDDLE EAST/LEBANESE SITUATION. I THEN WENT THROUGH THE TALKING POINTS WITH HIM. FAHMY DISAGREES THAT LEBANON HAS SERIOUSLY COMPLICATED MIDDLE EAST PEACE PROSPECTS. INSTEAD, HE CONTENDS THAT LEBANON WILL HELP THE PEACE PROCESS. IN SUPPORT OF HIS VIEW, HE NOTES SYRIA IS IN BAD SITUATION, PLO IS WEAKENED, AND A KIND OF BALANCE HAS DEVELOPED IN LEBANON. AT COLOMBO, IN FACE OF BITTER IRAQI CRITICISM OF PEACE PROCESS, EVEN KHADDAM HAD STATED CO CONFEREES THAT SYRIA WISHES TO CONTINUE THE PEACE PROCESS AND GO TO GENEVA. FAHMY ALSO BELIEVES WE SHOULD NOT WRITE OFF PLO. DESPITE BATTERING IT HAS TAKEN IN LEBANON, IT REMAINS A POLITICAL AND MILITARY FORCE TO BE RECKONED WITH. HUSSEIN CANNOT HOPE TO SPEAK FOR PALESTINIANS. FAHMY GENERALLY LIKED OUR FORMULATION ON THE PLO AND VIEWED IT AS A STEP FORWARD IN OUR THINKING. HE DOUBTS THAT THERE IS ANY REAL DANGER OF SYRIA BEING HUMILIATED, AND

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INSISTS GOE HAS NO INTENTION OF FURTHERING SUCH AN OBJECTIVE.

GOE DOES OBJECT TO "DISHONEST" WAY IN WHICH SYRIA HAS ACTED IN LEBANON. AN EVENTUAL SYRIA-EGYPT RECONCILIATION IS NEEDED AND SAUDIS ARE BEST SUITED TO TRY TO ACHIEVE THIS. FAHMY ATTRIBUTED SADAT'S CHANGE OF VIEW ON ASAD TO THE PRESIDENT'S DEEP HURT ABOUT WHAT HE REGARDS AS OUR "GLORIFICATION" OF ASAD. DEPT PRESS SPOKESMAN AND OFFICIALS HAD HAILED ASAD AS TOUGH MAN WHO BARGAINS HARD, IMPLYING SADAT IS SOFT AND READILY MAKES CONCESSIONS. I STRONGLY REFUTED ANY JUSTIFICATION FOR SUCH IMPRESSION. CONTENDING IT NEVERTHELESS EXISTS, FAHMY ASSERTED IT IS A SCAR WHICH WILL BE HARD TO HEAL. IT MIGHT BE HELPED IF WE COULD OBTAIN SOME FURTHER UNILATERAL ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL IN SINAI OR INCREASE IN AID PROGRAM. FAHMY THEN ASKED FOR YOUR ANALYSIS IN WRITING SO THAT HE CAN MAKE MORE CONSIDERED COMMENTS. PLEASE INSTRUCT. END SUMMARY

1. MY SESSION WITH FAHMY YESTERDAY IN ALEXANDRIA WAS THE FIRST OCCASION THAT I HAVE BEEN ABLE TO SEE HIM SINCE MY RETURN FROM TEHRAN, AND HIS RETURN FROM COLOMBO. I THEREFORE TOLD HIM ABOUT MY MEETING WITH SADAT TO DISCUSS YOUR ANALYSIS OF THE MIDDLE EAST/LEBANON SITUATION. SOMEWHAT SURPRISINGLY, FAHMY SEEMED NOT TO KNOW THAT I HAD MET WITH THE PRESIDENT, AND I HAD THE IMPRESSION THAT SADAT MAY NOT HAVE MENTIONED THE MEETING TO HIM WHEN THEY MET IN COLOMBO SEVERAL DAYS LATER. I REMINDED FAHMY THAT I HAD TOLD HIM ON THE PHONE THE NIGHT OF MY RETURN AND THE DAY BEFORE HIS DEPARTURE THAT I WOULD ASK FOR A MEETING WITH THE PRESIDENT AND HE HAD THOUGHT THIS WAS A GOOD IDEA. ALTHOUGH I HAD ALREADY GIVEN THE PRESIDENT YOUR ANALYSIS, YOU HAD ALSO ASKED ME TO GIVE IT TO FAHMY AND REQUEST HIS COMMENTS. I THEN WENT THROUGH THE TALKING POINTS ITEM BY ITEM, AS I HAD DONE WITH SADAT, SO THAT THERE MIGHT BE NO CONFUSION.

2. I HAD NO SOONER GONE THROUGH THE FIRST POINT ON LEBANON WHEN FAHMY INTERRUPTED TO SAY HE DISAGREED. HE DISPUTED THE CONTENTION THAT LEBANON HAS SERIOUSLY COMPLICATED ME PEACE PROSPECTS AND ARGUED THAT IT WILL HELP THE PEACE PROCESS RATHER THAN HURT IT. AS A RESULT OF LEBANON, SYRIA IS IN A BAD SITUATION. THE PLO, AT LEAST FOR THE TIME BEING, IS WEAKENED. MOREOVER, A KIND OF BALANCE HAS NOW DEVELOPED IN LEBANON. ALL THESE DEVELOPMENTS, IN HIS VIEW, WILL HELP

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THE PEACE PROCESS. HE THEN QUOTED WHAT HE CALLED A CURRENT SAYING IN GOE INNER CIRCLES AS TO THE EFFECT THAT, "IF THERE WERE NO LEBANON, WE WOULD HAVE TO CREATE ONE."

3. EVEN SYRIA WANTS TO GO TO GENEVA, FAHMY ASSERTED. HE THEN RELATED THAT, AT COLOMBO, IRAQI PRIME MINISTER SADDAM HUSEIN EL-TIKRITI HAD BITTERLY ATTACKED THE PEACE PROCESS, CONTENDING THAT WAR IS THE ONLY WAY TO SETTLE THE ARAB-ISRAEL ISSUE.

FAHMY CLAIMS HE ASKED FOR THE FLOOR TO REBUT SADDAM. HE HAD STATED ALL THE DELEGATIONS PRESENT KNEW IRAQI POSITIONS. ALL HAD SEEN THEM REPEATEDLY IN THE PRESS AND HAD HEARD THEM. IF THE IRAQI DELEGATE WAS SIMPLY ENGAGED IN POLITICAL AGGONIZING, ALL PRESENT WOULD UNDERSTAND THIS. IF THE IRAQI DELEGATE WAS SERIOUS, HE INVITED HIM TO SEND IRAQI TROOPS TO THE SINAI FRONT. THIS WAS THE FRONTLINE AND THE IRAQIS WOULD THEN BE PUTTING THEIR MONEY WHERE THEIR MOUTH WAS. ALTHOUGH SADDAM HAD NOT REPLIED, KHADDAM HAD THEN TAKEN THE FLOOR TO SAY SYRIA WISHES TO CONTINUE THE PEACE PROCESS AND TO GO TO GENEVA. SYRIA WILL DO SO UNTIL IT IS EVIDENT THAT PEACE PROCESS PROSPECTS ARE NON-EXISTENT. FAHMY VIEWED THIS STATEMENT AS SYRIAN RE-ENDORSEMENT OF DESIRE TO GO TO GENEVA IF THERE IS ANY PROSPECT OF OBTAINING A MEANINGFUL GOLAN II. LAST FALL'S OFFER OF "400 METERS IN THE SOUTH" WAS NOTHING AND SYRIA WAS RIGHT IN REJECTING IT.

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FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6492

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NODIS

CHEROKEE

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM AMBASSADOR

4. AFTER THIS INTERVENTION, I WAS ABLE TO PROCEED IN DETAILING YOUR ANALYSIS. AFTER I HAD FINISHED, FAHMY MADE SEVERAL ADDITIONAL POINTS. FIRST, HE COMMENTED THAT WE SHOULD NOT WRITE OFF THE PLO. ALTHOUGH IT HAS BEEN WEAKENED IN LEBANON, IT REMAINS A MILITARY AND POLITICAL FORCE TO BE RECKONED WITH. NEITHER WE NOR HUSSEIN NOR ASAD SHOULD BELIEVE THAT HUSSEIN CAN HOPE TO SPEAK FOR THE PALESTINIANS. FAHMY, NEVERTHELESS,

LIKED OUR FORMULATION OF THE PLO AND DESCRIBED OUR EXPLICIT INDICATION OF READINESS TO BRING THE PLO INTO THE PEACE NEGOTIATIONS EVENTUALLY AS A GRATIFYING STEP FORWARD IN OUR THINKING.

5. SECOND, HE DID NOT SEE HOW THERE IS ANY REAL DANGER OF SYRIA BEING HUMILIATED. GOE'S PURPOSE, HE INSISTED, IS NOT TO HUMILIATE SYRIA. AS HE HAD PREVIOUSLY TOLD ME, GOE RECOGNIZES SYRIAN GEOPOLITICAL INTERESTS IN LEBANON. ITS SOLE OBJECTION IS THE "DISHONEST" WAY IN WHICH SYRIA HAS ACTED IN LEBANON. SPECIFICALLY, (A) IT HAS PUBLICLY CHARGED THAT SINAI II IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE LEBANESE CHAOS; (B) IT HAS SOUGHT TO USE A SUCCESS IN LEBANON AGAINST EGYPT AND SADAT'S LEADERSHIP IN THE ARAB WORLD; AND (C) IT IS SEEKING TO CRUSH THE PLO AND REPLACE IT WITH A PRO-SYRIAN PALESTINIAN ORGANIZATION. BUT, AS HE HAD EARLIER STATED, A BALANCE HAS BEEN ACHIEVED AND WILL CONTINUE. SYRIA IS BOGGED DOWN IN  
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LEBANON AND NEEDS A WAY OUT. HE AGREED THAT THERE SHOULD BE AN EVENTUAL RECONCILIATION BETWEEN EGYPT AND SYRIA AND OPINED THAT SAUDI ARABIA IS BEST SUITED TO TRY TO ACHIEVE THIS. THE KUWAITIS SIMPLY FOLLOW THE SAUDI LEAD.

6. I TOLD HIM I WAS GLAD TO HEAR HIS VIEWS AND NOTED I HAD BEEN SURPRISED TO HEAR THE PRESIDENT, DESPITE SADAT'S EARLIER POSITION OF DRAWING A DISTINCTION BETWEEN ASAD AND THE SYRIAN BAATH, NOW EQUATING THE TWO. SADAT HAD SAID THAT ASAD WILL FALL SOONER OR LATER AND HAD EVEN SEEMED TO BE ENDORSING ASAD'S POSSIBLE DEMISE. FAHMY SAID HE DISAGREED WITH THIS ASSESSMENT. THERE IS NO REASON WHY THE LEBANESE SITUATION SHOULD BE CARRIED TO A POINT WHERE ASAD MIGHT FALL, ALTHOUGH HE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT ASAD'S DOMESTIC PROBLEMS COULD BRING THIS ABOUT. ASAD'S FALL WOULD NOT BE HELPFUL.

7. AS FOR THE PRESIDENT'S CHANGED VIEW OF ASAD, FAHMY SAID WE SHOULD UNDERSTAND THE REASONFOR THIS. WHETHER OR NOT THE PRESIDENT MENTIONS THE MATTER, SADAT IS DEEPLY HURT BY WHAT HE REGARDS AS OUR CONSCIOUS "GLORIFICATION" OF ASAD. AFTER SADAT HAD MADE THE CONCESSIONS, WE HAD TURNED OUR BACKS ON HIM AND COURTED ASAD. DEPT PRESS SPOKESMEN AND DEPT OFFICIALS HAD HAILED ASAD AS THE TOUGH MAN WHO BARGAINS HARD, WHILE SADAT WAS SOFT AND READILY MAKES CONCESSIONS. I TOLD FAHMY THAT THIS WAS AN ABSOLUTELY WRONG INFERENCE. WE HAD NEVER SOUGHT TO GLORIFY ASAD AND, AS I HAD JUST TOLD HIM, HAVE NO ILLUSIONS ABUT ASAD. WE HAVE WORKED WITH ASAD SINCE SINAI II BECAUSE BOTH GOE AND WE HAD AGREED THAT A SECOND GOLAN DISENGAGEMENT HAD TO BE THE NEXT STEP. BUT FAHMY WAS SURELY AWARE THAT WE HAVE REPEATEDLY STRESSED THAT WE REGARD SADAT

AS THE PRINCIPAL ARAB LEADER AND WANT TO WORK WITH HIM IN THAT CONTEXT. FAHMY COMMENTED THAT WE SAY THIS, BUT ACT OTHERWISE AS EVIDENCED BY OUR HANDLING OF ASAD'S ACTIONS IN LEBANON. WE SHOULD KNOW THAT SO FAR AS SADAT IS CONCERNED, THE SCAR REMAINS AND IT WILL BE HARD TO REMOVE.

8. I AGAIN SAID SUCH AN IMPRESSION IS TOTALLY UNJUSTIFIED. HOWEVER, IF IT EXISTS, WE WOULD WANT TO TAKE SOME STEPS TO CORRECT IT. DID FAHMY HAVE ANY SUGGESTIONS? FAHMY CONTENTED IT WILL NOT BE EASY SINCE SADAT HAS A LONG MEMORY. EVER ON SECRET

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THELOOKOUT FOR A BARGAINING OPPORTUNITY, HE SUGGESTED THAT WE TRY TO GET SOME FURTHER UNILATERAL ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL IN THE SINAI. THIS WOULD PROVE TO SADAT THAT WE ARE STILL INTERESTED IN HIS CONCERNS. ALTERNATIVELY, WE MIGHT APPRECIABLY INCREASE OUR AID PROGRAM FOR EGYPT AS EVIDENCE OF THE IMPORTANCE WE ATTACH TO SADAT. I REMINDED HIM THAT OUR AID PROGRAM FOR EGYPT IS ALREADY THE LARGEST SUCH PROGRAM EXTANT AND THAT WE ARE HAVING PROBLEMS WITH THE UTILIZATION RATE. FAHMY SAID HE HAD NO OTHER IDEAS, BUT WANTED US TO BE AWARE OF SADAT'S FEELINGS.

9. FAHMY THEN ASKED THAT I GIVE HIM THE ANALYSIS IN WRITING SO THAT HE CAN MAKE A MORE DETAILED STUDY AND PROVIDE MORE CONSIDERED COMMENTS. HE CLAIMED THAT HE COULD NOT REMEMBER ALL THE POINTS ON A SINGLE READING. DO YOU WISH ME TO GIVE IT TO HIM IN WRITING?

10. COMMENT: THE CONTRAST BETWEEN SADAT'S AND FAHMY'S REACTIONS TO YOUR ANALYSIS IS INTERESTING. WHILE BOTH BELIEVE THAT WE MAY BE UNDERRATING THE STAYING POWER OF THE PLO, FAHMY AT LEAST IS CONVINCED THAT LEBANON WILL HELP RATHER THAN HURT THE PEACE PROCESS. SADAT IS LESS SURE AND VOLUNTEERED THE ALTERNATIVE OF A SINAI III IF WE CANNOT GET COMPREHENSIVE NEGOTIATIONS UNDERWAY EARLY IN 1977. ALTHOUGH SADAT HAS CONCLUDED ASAD WILL FALL AND SEEMS FOR THE THE MOMENT TO RELISH THIS PROSPECT, FAHMY DOES NOT BELIEVE SUCH A DEVELOPMENT IS EITHER NECESSARY OR HELPFUL. ON SADAT'S ALLEGED SENSE OF HURT BECAUSE HE THINKS WE HAVE GLORIFIED ASAD, THIS IS PROBABLY TRUE. YOU WILL RECALL THAT IN MY PENULTIMATE MEETING WITH SADAT ON JUNE 27 (CAIRO 8747) I TOLD HIM OF YOUR CONCERN ABOUT SUGGESTIONS THAT WE WERE COLLUDING WITH THE SYRIANS IN LEBANON AND NOTED HIS COMMENT TO A PRESSMAN ABOUT "SMELLING A RAT". HE MADE AN EXCUSE AT THE TIME THAT HE DID NOT BELIEVE COLLUSION STORIES AND CLAIMED HIS REFERENCE HAD BEEN TO HUSSEIN. HOWEVER, SINCE THAT TIME WE HAVE HAD SEVERAL INDICATIONS THAT HE HAS AGAIN USED THE TERM IN SPEAKING OF HIS SUSPICIONS OF US-SYRIAN COLLUSION IN LEBANON. SINCE THAT MEETING HE HAS SAID NOTHING MORE TO ME ABOUT IT, BUT THE

VIEW IS WIDESPREAD AND I DOUBT THAT SADAT HAS SHAKEN IT OFF.  
WHETHER JUSTIFIABLE OR NOT, SADAT PROBABLY DOES FEEL THAT HE  
HAD BEEN SLIGHTED IN FAVOR OF ASAD AND BELIEVES THAT WE NOW  
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REGARD THE LATTER AS THE TOUGH ARAB LEADER. IT IS ESSENTIAL  
THAT WE TRY TO REDRESS THIS SITUATION AND LOOK FOR WAYS OF  
AGAIN GIVING SOME PUBLIC PROMINENCE TO OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH  
GOE AND TO SADAT'S ROLE. SOME WELL PLACED DEPT PRESS  
SPOKESMAN STATEMENTS MIGHT HELP AND AN EARLY RESPONSE TO  
SADAT'S LAST IDEA THAT WE DO SOME THINKING ABOUT WHAT COMES  
NEXT WOULD DOUBTLESS ALSO BE USEFUL FIRST STEP. HOWEVER,  
AS LONG AS LEBANON CONTINUES, SADAT WILL ALWAYS WATCH HOW WE  
SEEM TO BE HANDLING ASAD.EILST

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